



the Lantern

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A newsletter of the Presentation Lantern Center, Dubuque, Iowa
Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, Iowa

New Executive Director

World traveler plants her feet at Lantern Center

In mid-May, the Board of Trustees, staff, tutors and English language students welcomed Sarah Gieseke, the new Executive Director for Presentation Lantern.

Sarah, a native of Wisconsin, has lived and worked in several places in the United States and beyond its borders. As an undergraduate of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse she studied for two semesters at the University of Caen in France. Later she earned her Master of Arts degree in International Human Rights with a specialization in Migrant and Refugee Issues at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

Sarah has worked in a variety of places in both government and nonprofit sectors. Her assignments have included the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program in sub-Saharan Africa based in Nairobi, Kenya; the Harpswell Foundation in Cambodia; Rabbis for Human Rights in Jerusalem and the West Bank; AmeriCorps VISTA in emergency preparedness in Louisiana; and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the Denver District Office both as an intern and as an Asylum Officer in the Washington, D.C. area.



Sister Corine passes the lantern to Sarah Gieseke, new Executive Director of Presentation Lantern. (Photo credit, Sisters of the Presentation.)

“The wisdom Sarah acquired through these experiences, her heart for advocacy and her passion for immigrants will serve her well as she works with Lantern Center students from around the world,” comments Corine Murray, PBVM, retiring Executive Director.

Reflecting on the past 15 years as Founder and Executive Director at the center, Corine reminisces, “I’ve viewed the world

through the eyes of people from five continents and 56 different countries and it has been an amazing experience. I feel connected to so many places; I now watch world news with a pair of different eyes.”

The lantern is being passed and its light is bright. “I am so happy to be working to assist immigrants in Dubuque, which is near my family in Southwest Wisconsin,” Sarah remarks. “I am looking forward to continuing Sister Corine’s exceptional legacy at the Lantern Center.”

Sarah states that she enjoys the diversity found in the human race and feels a personal calling to be advocate for inclusion in the Midwest. Like Corine and the volunteer tutors who work one-on-one with the students, Sarah will continue to change lives.

LANTERN CENTER

Welcome



by Corine Murray, PBVM



Without a plane ticket or a suitcase, I have traveled the world through my relationships with many brave and

courageous students who came to the center. It has been an experience that has changed me.

With our generous volunteer tutors, we extended hospitality to people from around the world. Not only did our students learn English and prepare for the Citizenship Test, but they also made friends, grew in their understanding of American culture and found their way in a new country.

The sponsorship of the Sisters of the Presentation informed our mission, shaped our vision and supported the center in significant ways. The leadership of the Board of Trustees provided wisdom and guidance. Friends and benefactors, including individuals, faith communities, foundations and businesses, helped to keep the welcoming light of the lantern burning brightly. I am so grateful to all of you.

Hospitality to the stranger is at the very heart of our mission. In this, my last message, I offer a quote from the Epistle to the Hebrews, “*Do not neglect to show hospitality, for by that means some have entertained angels without knowing it.*” Heb. 13:2

Changing lives, Life-changing benefits for tutors

by Beth Kress, PBVM

Many volunteer tutors at Presentation Lantern attest that while giving to their students they have received in return.

Mary Jean Gregory, a former teacher and editor, says that she is in a new teaching role because of her association with the Lantern Center where she began tutoring in 2005.

“The immediate benefits of tutoring include friendships with students; the interchange of cultures, countries and languages; learning while teaching; and sharing joys and sorrows,” states Mary Jean. She has met, befriended, shared and exchanged life stories and more with 12 students from 8 countries in 12 years of tutoring.

These relationships were the impetus for her pursuit of a graduate degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. In 2015, she received her Master of Arts degree from the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. She now works part time with students at three learning centers in the Holy Family Catholic Schools in Dubuque.

“I pursued the degree because I wanted to know how an adult best learns another language,” she indicates. “I found that there is no single best way, but that such values as reciprocity, reverse-mentoring, giving and receiving, hospitality and doing what you can to help the other feel at home are keys to the process.”

Tutor **Don Koppes**’ connection to the center has also been very significant. With teaching skills honed from years in a classroom, Don began to volunteer in 2008. It was here that he met Argaw from Ethiopia. Don became Argaw’s teacher, mentor and friend.

“I was drawn to what I saw as Argaw’s goodness, humility and integrity,” remarks Don. “As I continued to work with Argaw, I saw how motivated he was to learn.”



Top, l. to r., Min (China) and Mary Jean Gregory. **Bottom**, l. to r., Don Koppes and Argaw. (Photo credit, Friends of Homacho.)

With Don’s help, Argaw improved his English skills, got a job at a Hy-Vee grocery store and learned to drive. In August of 2010, Don and his wife, Caroline, invited Argaw to move into their home. In December of that year, they accompanied Argaw to his hometown in Ethiopia where he and his fiancée, Workensh, were married.

Don, who had always worked in a well-equipped classroom, was

touched by the reality of a dirt floor in the rural school. After returning to Dubuque, he began to raise funds for a new concrete floor. He also began tutoring Workensh.

Realizing that a greater priority in Homacho was clean water, Don then raised funds for a water project so that women and children would not need to walk six miles round trip for cooking and drinking water. This project and many following resulted in Don creating Friends of Homacho, a non-profit organization, in 2011.

“Through the Lantern Center, this friendship with Argaw, his wife, their families and village has had a significant impact on my life,” states Don. “My life is no longer about me, but what I can do for others.” Because of Don’s work, life in Homacho is changing for the better.



SCHMID INNOVATION CENTER
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The Presentation Lantern Center is a drop-in center offering hospitality, educational opportunities and advocacy to adult immigrants, especially women, who are striving to better their lives. Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, Iowa, the center is a non-profit organization.

HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Tuesday, Thursday
1:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Contact us at
563-557-7134
thelanterncenter@gmail.com

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We welcome your support and prayers. Your generosity touches many lives and hearts from around the world.

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PHOTO GALLERY

Shining the Lantern Light



Left, l. to r., Executive Director Sarah Gieseke and Erika (Mexico) study for the Citizenship Test. **Center**, New U.S. citizen, Ina (Ukraine) proudly displays her American flag. **Right**, l. to r., Mussab (Sudan), tutor Lorrie Etheredge, tutor Dianne Harris and Brenda (Venezuela) admire a quilt made by Lorrie’s mother.